

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES 1-15/MGR**

Revised: April 2004

**NAMING CITY-OWNED LAND AND FACILITIES**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that City-owned land and facilities, when named for individuals, are persons who have made significant contributions or performed services deemed to have been of major importance to the community.

This policy establishes uniform procedures for the naming of City-owned land and facilities as set forth by Council Resolution No. 6211, approved on December 12, 1983, and revised by Council on April 12, 2004. The policy is applicable to new and existing City-owned land and facilities.

The policy provides a mechanism for citizens to suggest names which they believe should be considered for new City facilities or land acquisitions and for the renaming of existing facilities and lands. The policy also establishes criteria which will guide the Historical Association and the appropriate City Commission or Committee in recommending names to the Council for approval.

Naming and renaming City-owned land and facilities shall be the responsibility of the City Council. However, places within City-owned land or facilities, such as a room or patio within a building or a trail or athletic field within a park, which do not require formal dedication by the City Council, may be named by the City Manager or his/her designee, subject to final approval by the City Council via the consent calendar.

This process does not apply to the naming of streets which will continue to be processed through the Planning and Community Environment Department (Policy and Procedure 1-16: Naming of City Streets). The naming of a street may be considered an appropriate alternative means of honoring an individual.

**PROCEDURE FOR NAMING NEW FACILITIES OR CITY-OWNED LANDS**

**A. Responsibility of the Project Manager**

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the department in which the project to be named is managed. In the instance of a new City-owned land or facility, the project manager should incorporate the process for naming into the project schedule so the naming is accomplished in a timely manner.

1. Requests concerning a name to be given to the City-owned land or facility shall be made in writing on an approved suggestion form to the City Clerk.

- a. The project manager should alert the City Clerk when to expect the submission of names and the anticipated time frame for the naming process.
- b. The project manager may submit suggested names on an approved suggestion form on behalf of staff or citizens who have been involved in the project development.
- c. In some instances, it may be appropriate to actively solicit suggestions and, in those cases, the project manager should specify a time frame for submissions and method of notification.
- d. All submittals, whether from an individual or an organization, must include the name and address of the submitter. No anonymous submittals will be accepted.
- e. All suggestions will be given the same consideration without regard to the nomination source.

2. The project manager is responsible for conveying the name suggestion forms from the City Clerk to the Palo Alto Historical Association and presenting the recommendations from the Historical Association to the appropriate commission or committee whose sphere of influence is most closely associated with the facility in question. The Parks and Recreation Commission shall review name suggestions for acquired land to be dedicated as a park, recreational facilities, community centers and interpretive centers. The Library Advisory Commission shall review name suggestions for library facilities. The Public Art Commission shall review name suggestions for art facilities. The Policy and Services Committee shall review name suggestions for police, fire or utility facilities as well as major civic complexes.

- a. The Historical Association may also originate suggestions for names or provide suggestions for appropriate alternatives as part of its recommendations.
- b. The project manager shall assure that adequate time is allowed for the Historical Association and the appropriate commission or committee to evaluate the recommended names.
- c. The Historical Association shall determine if the suggested names meet the criteria of appropriate significance, and shall submit the recommendations to the appropriate commission or committee together with the rationale for the recommendations. The response from the Historical Association shall acknowledge all the names that are submitted, but recommend only those which it feels meet the criteria and warrant serious consideration.

#### B. Responsibility of the Reviewing Commission Or Committee

- 1. The commission or committee shall conduct a public hearing, confirm that the recommended names meet the criteria of appropriate significance, select

recommendation(s) provided by the Historical Association, and shall forward its recommendation to the City Council. The report from the commission or committee shall acknowledge all of the recommended names together with their evaluation, but present only the name(s) which it feels best meets the criteria and merits serious consideration by the City Council.

2. Once approved, a transmittal and resolution will be prepared by staff for consideration and approval by the City Council. The transmittal shall include a narrative of historic reference prepared by the Palo Alto Historical Association for the name, a copy of the name suggestion form, and minutes of the Commission meeting when the recommendation was discussed.

### C. Criteria

The following criteria shall be used in selecting an appropriate name for City-owned land and facilities.

1. The name should, if possible, have or preserve the geographic, environmental (relating to natural or physical features), historic or landmark connotation of particular significance to the area in which the land or facility is located, or for the City as a whole. Either connotation is equally valid.

2. Acknowledgement of contributions: Consideration may be given to naming the City-owned land or facility after an individual when the land or facility, or the money for its purchase, has been donated by the individual, or when otherwise warranted by some contribution or service which is deemed to be of major and lasting significance to the acquisition of that piece of land, or planning, development, construction or renovation of that particular facility. Donation of land or resources shall not constitute an obligation by the City to name the land or facility or any portion thereof, after an individual or family. City-owned lands or parks shall not be named for benefactor organizations, groups or businesses, but in special cases, may be considered for sub-facilities such as rooms or playgrounds.

3. Names honoring individuals or families, other than those of recognized historic importance, must be supported by compelling reasons.

4. In the event the City-owned land or facility was formerly school property or had other ownership such that the name of the school, building or site has community significance or community recognition, consideration may be given to preserving that name.

5. The City encourages naming which reflects the City's ethnic and cultural diversity.

6. No City-owned land or facility shall be named after a seated elected or appointed official.

7. No City-owned land or facility shall be named after a person whose contribution to the City of Palo Alto was or is a part of that individual's normal duties as an employee of the City. An exception may be made for former such employees who have contributed volunteer services of an exceptional nature beyond their normal duties.

#### D. Council Action

1. The recommendations received from the Historical Association and the commission or committee shall be placed on the Council agenda for final approval.

2. Action by the Council shall be by Council Resolution.

#### E. Follow-up to Selection of the Name

1. The above-described process for selecting an appropriate name should precede the preparation of a park dedication ordinance.

2. Subsequent to approval by the City Council, the name for the City-owned land or facility shall be conveyed to the Department of Public Works for incorporation in City official maps and plans, and to the Palo Alto Historical Association for its records.

#### F. Naming Places Within City-owned Land or Facilities

In the case of places within City-owned land or facilities, where the policy does not require a Council resolution, responsibility for requesting Council approval of the new name shall reside with the department head who manages the land or facility.

Ideally, the naming of features within a park and specific trails or facilities within open space lands will occur during the master plan or site plan process.

Names within parks should be appropriate to the park by reflecting the expression of the place (topography, geology, natural features), flora and fauna, or history of the area.

In advance of the naming, the department head shall send a memorandum to the City Manager advising of the proposed action and requesting approval. The City Manager will then seek approval of the name from the City Council via the consent calendar.

### **PROCEDURE FOR RENAMING EXISTING FACILITIES OR CITY-OWNED LANDS**

Existing place names are deemed to have historic recognition. City policy is not to change the name of any existing facilities or City-owned land, particularly one whose name has City or regional significance, unless there are compelling reasons to do so. Further, the City will consider renaming to commemorate a person or persons only when the person or persons have made major, overriding contributions to the City and whose distinctions are as yet unrecognized.

#### A. Renaming Suggestions

1. All requests concerning a new name to be given to the City-owned land or facility shall be made in writing on an approved suggestion form to the City Clerk. The suggestion must detail how the proposed name change is consistent with the criteria, the purpose of the name change, and how the new name is directly associated with the land or facility.
2. All submittals, whether from an individual, organization or City staff, must include the name and address of the submitter. No anonymous submittals will be accepted.
3. The City Council shall initiate the renaming process by referral of the public or staff request to the commission or committee whose sphere of influence is most closely associated with the facility in question. Council can also initiate the renaming of lands or a facility without a public request whenever deemed necessary or in the best interest of the City of Palo Alto, following established criteria. Once the referral is made by the City Council to a specific commission or committee, the commission or committee will await comment and evaluation of the new name from the Palo Alto Historical Association.

#### B. Responsibility of the Project Manager

1. The City Clerk is responsible for conveying the name suggestion form(s) received by the deadline to the Project Manager, who will be responsible for forwarding to the Palo Alto Historical Association and then transmitting the recommendation(s) from the Palo Alto Historical Association to the appropriate commission or committee as outlined in Section A above.
2. The recognized neighborhood association in the vicinity of the land or facility will be notified of the proposed name change at the time the reviewing commission or committee receives the report from the Historical Association.

#### C. Responsibility of the Reviewing Commission Or Committee

1. The commission or committee shall conduct a public hearing, confirm that the suggested name(s) meet the criteria of appropriate significance, select recommendation(s) from the names provided by the Historical Association, and shall forward its recommendation to the City Council. The report from the commission or committee shall acknowledge any recommended names together with its evaluation, but present only the name or names which it feels best meets the criteria and merits serious consideration by the Council.
2. Once approved, a transmittal and resolution will be prepared by staff for consideration and approval by the City Council. The transmittal shall include a narrative of historic reference for the name or names, together with a copy of the name suggestion form.

#### D. Criteria

Each application for renaming a city park or facility must meet the criteria in this policy, but meeting all criteria does not ensure renaming.

City-owned lands and facilities may be renamed for an individual(s) under the following conditions. Where the individual:

1. Has made lasting and significant contributions to the protection of natural or cultural resources of the City of Palo Alto, or
2. Has made substantial contributions to the betterment of a specific facility or park, consistent with the established standards for the facility, or
3. Has made substantial contributions to the advancement of commensurate types of recreational opportunities within the City of Palo Alto.

E. Council Action

1. The recommendations received from the Palo Alto Historical Association and commission or committee shall be submitted for Council approval.
2. Action by the Council shall be by Council Resolution.

F. Follow-up to Selection of Name

1. Subsequent to approval by the City Council, the new name for the City-owned land or facility shall be conveyed to the Department of Public Works for incorporation in City official maps and plans, and to the Palo Alto Historical Association for its records.

*NOTE: Questions and/or clarification of this policy should be directed to the City Manager's Office.*